

Interactions

Family Social Science Newsletter



Letter from the Department Head

Greetings!

Today, we will be celebrating the end of our 2009-2010 Academic year with a noon meal together. Many difficult things have happened in higher education, here at the University, and within our department during this year. We are proud to say that, through it all, we continue to thrive as a supportive and intellectual community.

In this issue of *Interactions*, we emphasize a few of the milestones that have been a part of our Spring semester. Information about Dr. Solheim's study abroad to Thailand and the negotiation of a Memorandum of Understanding with colleagues in Iraq highlight our commitment to a global society and to our students participating as global citizens through their experiences in Family Social Science. The participation of our undergraduates in this spring's Relay for Life event underscores student's commitment to helping others. Our colloquium series provides us with conversation among ourselves about FSoS scholarship and the opportunity to learn from others across the university and in our communities.

Throughout this issue, we also highlight the research accomplishments of our graduate students. How can I convey to you how proud I was to see their work represented at the CEHD Research Day event, to see Soehee Son explaining the work of her Graduate School Dissertation Fellowship to the Dean of the Graduate School, and to know that they are developing their research and professional skills as emerging scholars for our field of family science. A number of doctoral students have successfully completed their dissertations this semester. When I participated in their public presentations, remember them during their first semesters in FSoS, and see the quality of their work, the professional demeanor as they present their scholarship, I am overwhelmed with the privilege of seeing a bright future for family science.



Family & Culture in Thailand

Associate Professor Cathy Solheim led a group of 16 students on a three week trek through Thailand. Along the way, they learned from a different perspective about family, culture, and health care.

Details on page 2.

Relay for Life

Two FSOS undergrads participated in the 2010 Relay for life, helping their team to raise over \$500 for cancer research.

Details on page 4

Grad Research

FSOS graduate students have been busy showcasing their research at the college and university levels this spring.

Details on pages 5-6

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
+ HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Health, family, and culture come to life for students in Thailand

In the three weeks, from December 28, 2009 to January 21, 2010, Associate Professor Cathy Solheim and an intrepid group of 16 students traversed Thailand, examining health care, family, and culture. The group traveled across the country, visiting high end hospitals and impoverished slums in Bangkok and later staying with local families in their homes and visiting Buddhist temples.

Cities campuses represented a wide range of academic experience. Undergraduate majors included family social science, human resource development, pharmacy, and health care management. One of the graduate students is currently studying pharmacy, and the other plans on applying to medical school.

understanding of village life and community. On the night of arrival, the group was greeted with dancing by the village elders, then they shared a large meal with local families. Students were given Thai names and went out on fishing boats to learn about the livelihood of the village.

An HIV/AIDS center in Chiang Mai, in northern Thailand, provided another learning experience at the intersection of health education and culture. The center is housed at a Buddhist temple and was created by monks. In Thailand, HIV/AIDS patients are often shunned from society and cannot find work. The center serves not only as a place for these patients to work, but also as an education hub for distributing information on HIV/AIDS. As



The group with Thai dancers at the floating market

Solheim and Jill Klinger, a colleague from University of Minnesota – Duluth, first led this course to Thailand in 2007. The two have been close friends since their days as undergraduates. Klinger is an assistant professor of healthcare management at Duluth.

The 14 undergraduates and 2 graduate students from both the Duluth and Twin

In Bangkok, students were able to look into the “medical tourism” industry at Bumrungrad International Hospital. There are no “rooms” in the hospital, but rather suites for the patients. Many patients come from the Middle East, with their families often traveling to Thailand with them for their treatment. The hospital cares for the families as well, organizing events and tours.

On the other end of the spectrum, students took books and supplies to some of the poorest slum neighborhoods of Bangkok. While there, they played and interacted with children and spent time at a care center for the elderly.

A home stay experience in a fishing village near Bangkok gave students a deeper



Learning about Buddhism at Wat Panya, a temple

the center grew, local residents began to work alongside those affected by HIV/AIDS, breaking down myths and assumptions about the disease.

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“I believe that we should be culturally humble. We may never be able to fully understand another culture, but we can always have the desire to learn more.”

- Associate Professor Cathy Solheim

Thailand

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Of the students in the travel group, eight were Hmong, which provided a useful angle for students to discuss their own observations and challenges on the trip. Some of the Hmong students had been born in Thailand, but came to the United States when they were only a few years old. After travelling to Hmong villages, these students expressed an ability to be better able to relate to their parents.

Two of the students were able to connect with relatives in Thailand. When the group found out which villages they would be visiting, phone calls were placed back to families in the US, and information was exchanged for students to locate family

members. Since these relatives often did not have phone numbers or addresses, it was a matter of talking with other village members and being directed to the relative's home.

The students faced many challenges while traveling, one of which was learning to relax and "go with the flow." For students used to highly scheduled lives in the US, the relaxed flow of time in Thailand could be frustrating.

Solheim, who has had strong connections to Thailand since 1979, found herself occasionally challenged in allowing the students to experience culture shock and question things. She took on a role

of "cultural translator," using her understandings of these cultures to help guide the students in their learning and let them grow into their own experiences over the three weeks.

Though the course was short and intense, Solheim believes that experiences such as this encourage students to be better equipped at understanding the similarities, not just the differences of other cultures. "I believe that we should be culturally humble," she said. "We may never be able to fully understand another culture, but we can always have the desire to learn more."



Above: Students learn about Thai traditional massage at Wat Po



Above: Thai children living in Klong Toey slum area in Bangkok



Right: Learning Hmong art from elders



Mai Lee Vang (first row, green shirt) and Mai Joua Vang (front row, left) with their teammates and Associate Professor Cathy Solheim (back row, left) at the 2010 Relay for Life.

Undergrads raise over \$500 for cancer research walking Relay for Life

Mai Lee Vang and Mai Joua Vang, two undergraduate students in Family Social Science, walked in the 2010 American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, held on April 16, 2010, in the Field House on the University of Minnesota campus. In addition to their team raising over \$500 for cancer research, both Mai Lee and Mai Joua were deeply moved by the challenges and triumphs they experienced while participating in the Relay.

The American Cancer Society describes Relay for Life as "a life-changing event that gives everyone in communities across the globe a chance to celebrate the lives of people who have battled cancer, remember loved ones lost, and fight back against the disease. At Relay, teams of people camp out at a local high school, park, or fairground and take turns walking or running around a track or path. Each team is asked to have a representative on the track at all times during the event. Because cancer never sleeps, Relays are overnight events up to 24 hours in length."

The FSOS Relay team was diverse in its members. Undergraduate students came not only from FSOS majors, but also from

Human Resource Development, Individualized Studies, Communication, Youth Studies, Photography and Biochemistry.

A staff member from the Office of Equity and Diversity walked with the team, as did a graduate student from another college who did not have a Relay at her school but wanted to help in the fight against cancer. Associate Professor Cathy Solheim, a sixteen year survivor of cancer, also joined the team, sharing her experience and inspiring members to keep going.

Mai Lee had participated in the Relay last year with a team from the Hmong Minnesota Student Association (HMSA) and served as the team captain. She took on the captain's role again this year and was excited to be involved. "I wanted to devote one whole day to those who battled to see a new tomorrow," she said.

This was the first year of participation for Mai Joua, who decided to get involved because "FSOS is about helping others as much as we can." She said that the experience of walking in the Relay was great and that it made her feel that she could make a difference. She was also very touched to "see how many students on campus were willing to take their time on a Friday

evening and Saturday morning to support those with cancer."

The challenges of the Relay experience were met with team encouragement. Fundraising was made more difficult due to the economic climate. Since the Relay continues through the night, the hours of 3 to 6 in the morning saw the team fighting to stay awake and keep a team member walking. Mai Lee cited these wee hours of the morning as some of the most meaningful: "I saw that cancer was and is a never-ending battle. I learned that I took sleep for granted."

Both Mai Lee and Mai Joua would recommend participating in Relay to anyone. Mai Joua said that having at least one team member walking the track at all times showed the involvement and dedication of students on campus that they care about others.

Mai Lee graduated in May 2010 and will not be walking in the UMTC Relay again, although she plans on becoming involved in another Relay next year. "Relay is something that cannot be written in books and then taught to students or individuals," she said. "Relay does not just focus on individuals who are battling cancer for one day, but focuses on those who battle it for a lifetime."



Get involved!

For more information about the Relay for Life, visit their website at <http://www.relayforlife.org/>

Memorandum of understanding with University of Kufa in Iraq

Drs. Sara Axtell and Liz Wieling are working with the University of Kufa in Najaf, Iraq to develop a memorandum of understanding and continue on a path to partnership.

Two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been instrumental in developing this partnership. The Iraqi & American Reconciliation Project (IARP) and the Muslim Peacemaker Teams (MPT) have worked together since 2007 to forge peaceful understanding between Iraqis and Americans and aid Iraqi families in recovering from the devastation from war and civil unrest.

The MPT was formed by Sami Rasouli, a dual citizen of Iraq and America and longtime Minneapolis resident. Rasouli is known in the Minneapolis community as

a passionate advocate for peace. In 2004 he sold his business in the US to return to Iraq to offer his help.

Many issues face the people of Najaf in the wake of the US-led invasion and the subsequent restructuring of the federal government. Trauma is widespread, and effective treatment as well as understanding of trauma's effects on individuals and families is greatly needed. Cancer rates are rising rapidly, possibly due to uranium mining in the area. The people of Najaf are focused on rebuilding their city's infrastructure, especially that which relates to health care.

Collaboration with the University of Kufa will be beneficial for scholars and students in Iraq and the United States. Axtell stated that while faculty and staff exchange is a

goal for the future, the University of Minnesota more likely would be hosting faculty and students in the beginning of the partnership. Idea and resource exchange will be fostered through this partnership, promoting education and growth for both institutions and the communities they serve.

For more information

Muslim Peacemaker Teams

<http://mpt-iraq.org/>

Iraqi & American Reconciliation Project

<http://reconciliationproject.org/>



Seohee Son's dissertation featured at graduate showcase

Seohee Son, FSOS Ph.D. student, presented her doctoral research at the Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship Research Showcase, presented by the Graduate School on April 6, 2010, at Coffman Memorial Union.

Son began her work at the University of Minnesota in 2005 after finishing her master's degree in Korea. Her dissertation is entitled "Korean Divorced Mothers' Experience of Parenting After Divorce." Son's adviser is Dr. Kathryn Rettig.

Son cited that her motivation and inspiration for her research evolved from an experience volunteering in a Korean orphanage as an undergraduate. "I was shocked to discover that many of the children still had two living parents," she said. An economic crisis caused many families to be unable to care for their children, resulting in many children with living parents being placed into orphanages. When their parents became more economically stable, a few children were reclaimed but many never rejoined their families.

Son will defend her thesis in July of 2010, with plans on returning to Korea to pursue teaching positions in higher education.

Seohee Son discusses her research with Henning Schroeder, Dean of Graduate Studies.

FSOS well-represented at 2010 CEHD Research Day

Five Family Social Science research presentations were featured at the 2010 CEHD Research Day on April 9, which highlighted research projects and initiatives being conducted throughout the college.



Emily Becher presented "Development of a Culturally Sensitive Mental Health Screening Tool for Minnesota Refugees."



Nanci De Felippe presented "Professional and Family Communication According to Patient's Psychosocial Development."



Elizabeth Plowman (left) and Laurel Davis (right) presented "Violence Exposure of Children Residing in Supportive Housing."



Seohee Son presented "Korean Divorced Mothers' Experiences of Parenting After Divorce."



Karen Kramer presented "Changing Family Structure: The Case of Stay-at-Home Fathers."



Prof. Virginia Zuiker and Polina Sheldeshova presented "How They Learned from Money: Insights from College Students' Reflections"

Congratulations to Spring 2010 Graduate Dissertation Defenses



Julie Zaloudek

Date of defense:
April 30th, 2010

Dissertation title: "Spirituality, Sexuality, and Marital Intimacy: Protestants' Meanings and Experiences of the Metaphorical Jesus-Husband"



Chris Gonzalez

Date of defense: May 5th, 2010

Title: "Parent Modeling of Volunteering, Adolescent Religious Attendance, and Adolescent Volunteering"



Kristin Schneider-Dillon

Date of defense: May 4th, 2010

Title: "Parenting and Children's Adjustment in Families Living in Supportive Housing"



Johnben Teik-Cheok Loy

Date of defense:
May 13th, 2010

Title: "Dynasting Across Culture: A Grounded Theory of Malaysian Chinese Family Firms"



Margaret (Peggy) Andrews

Date of defense: May 3rd, 2010

Title: "Mothers with Professional Careers Talk About Flourishing"



INTERACTIONS is three times a year by the Department of Family Social Science, University of Minnesota. It is distributed to alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends of the department. We welcome your comments, ideas, suggestions, opinions, and news items, which you can send to asbrown@umn.edu.

B. Jan McCulloch, Department Head
Amanda Brown, Editor and Designer

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Family Social Science Colloquium Highlights: January - May 2010

Topic: *Family Meals and Why They Are Worth The Effort: What have we learned from Project EAT?*

Presenter: Dianne Neumark Stzainer,
School of Public Health



Topic: *Using Photography to Explore the Family*

Presenter: Dona Swartz,
photographer



Additional Topics

Topic: *The Real Issue Is Not the Culture: Hmong Community Leaders on the Struggles of Hmong American Youth & Families*
Presenter: Dr. Bic Ngo

Topic: *Immune-Power Personality & the Self-Care Connection to Work/Life Balance*
Presenter: Dr. Mary Johnson

Topic: *MN-Mexico Transnational Families Research-Outreach Project*
Presenter: Dr. Cathy Solheim and Dr. Virginia Zuiker

Topic: *A Visit to Iraq*
Presenter: Dr. Liz Wieling



Karen Organization of Minnesota

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Topic: *Tour of the Karen Organization of Minnesota*

Facilitator: Dr. Sara Axtell

The Karen Organization of Minnesota's ("KOM") mission is to provide resettlement and adjustment services and foster cultural knowledge and understanding for the Karen and Burmese refugees in Minnesota. KOM provides resettlement services to the Karen people through volunteers in the Karen community and area churches.



Topic: *Effects of the Mortgage Crisis on Individual, Family, and Community Health*

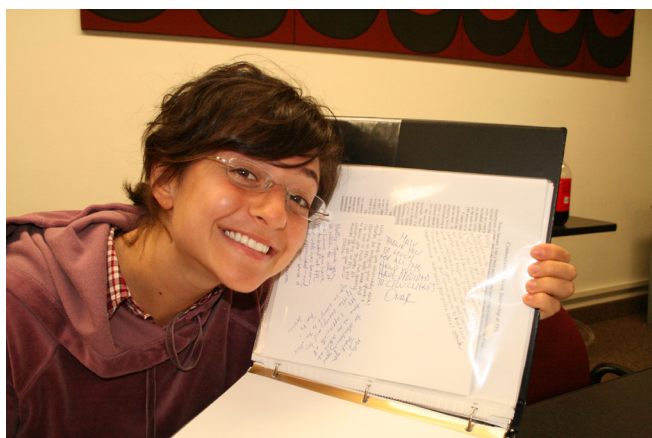
Presenters: Makeda Zulu-Gillespie, Raymond Dehn, Aasim Shabazz, Leola Crawford, Dr. Shonda Craft, Dr. Sara Axtell, Tisa Thomas

Undergraduate Senior Portfolio Day - May 5, 2010

On May 5, 2010, FSOS students enrolled in FSOS 4296, Field Study: Working with Families, displayed portfolios of their volunteer or research experiences as required by the course. Faculty and staff members discussed these portfolios as well as students' future plans, providing an excellent opportunity for students to network, connect with professionals in the field, and gain experience.



Brittany Thompson (far left) reviews her electronic portfolio with Professor Paul Rosenblatt. As of next fall, all portfolios will be electronic. Dr. William Goodman, Teaching Associate Professor and Senior Lecturer, jokingly offered those with paper portfolios an opportunity to re-enroll in the course so that their portfolios would be electronic.



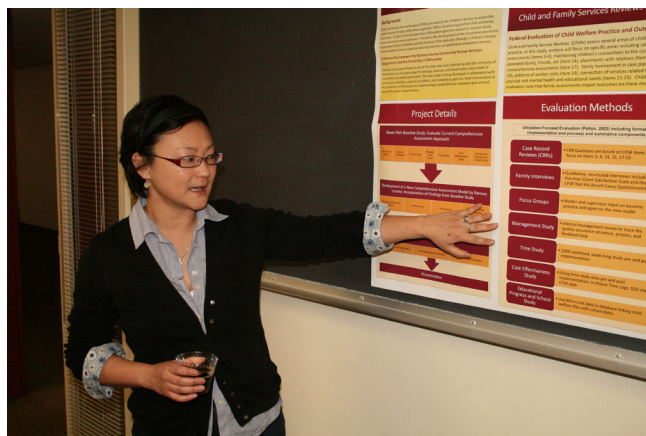
Molly Dworsky, a first year student in FSOS, took the internship course to find out more about the department and explore future career opportunities. She plans on pursuing a M.Ed. in family and consumer science, and interned with the Project for Pride in Living (PPL).



Dr. Jan McCulloch discusses Jessica Bonsell's portfolio.



Jessica Bonsell's portfolio outlined her internship with developmentally delayed adults. As a result of the internship, she has been offered a job as a Qualified Mental Retardation Professional (QMRP) and will begin work after her graduation in May of 2010.



Jae Ran Kim, MSW, displays a research poster from the school of social work. Emily Shea, Anna Burke, and Courtney Carlson were three FSOS seniors who assisted in research on the project instead of participating in an internship.

Student News

Ker Thao, has been accepted into the McNair Summer Research Program for 2010. The McNair Scholars Program works to generate in students the higher-level academic and research skills necessary to gain admission to and successfully complete graduate study.



Bibiana Koh, Ph.D. student, received a Women's Philanthropic Leadership Circle Award for 2010. Koh's research interests are in family interactions in adoptive and complex families (where parents and children are not genetically related), parent/child personality traits, child/adolescent adjustment, and individual/family identity.

Jason Wilde Ph.D. student was awarded the 2010 Mary Lampe Scholarship for dissertation work, sponsored by the Epsilon chapter of Pi Lambda Theta at the University of Minnesota. Wilde's research interests include how parents prepare children for marriage and teach children about human sexuality, couples relationship education, the intersection of family life and religion, program evaluation, and action research.



Nanci De Filippa, Ph.D. student, was accepted to the Buckman Fellowship for Leadership in Philanthropy. Nanci's background is in orthodontia and she is pursuing research to be able to advocate for patients and their families.



Katie Stone, FSOS undergrad, received a scholarship from the Alpha Chapter of Phi Upsilon Omicron in recognition of her outstanding scholarly and community work as a part of the University of Minnesota Medical Corps that responded to the I-35W bridge collapse.

Mary Kelleher, MFT Ph.D. student, received the Families, Illness & Collaborative Health Care doctoral fellowship from the University of Chicago Center for Family Health (CCFH) and Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center. She also received a scholarship from the Alpha Chapter of Phi Upsilon Omicron in recognition for her commitment to "healing, teaching, and civic work."



Spring Cake Day 2010



An end-of-the-semester tradition in Family Social Science continued this spring with free cake for students heading into the end of the semester and finals week.



Faculty and Alumni News

Virginia Zuiker was awarded the Tom H Swain Award, which recognizes highly notable individuals from the campus community who have devoted enormous amounts of time toward the academic success of student-athletes.



Shuji Asai (Ph.D., Family Social Science 2003) received the John Tate Award for excellence in undergraduate advising. Asai is a senior academic advisor in CEHD.



Tai Mendenhall received the 2010 Robert H. Beck Faculty Teaching Award. The award is given for excellence in teaching and advising, innovation in academic program development, and outstanding educational leadership.



Do you have news? Let us know!

We at Family Social Science would love to know about your latest accomplishments and goings-on to be included in future issues of *Interactions*. Send us an e-mail at fsos@umn.edu

Two FSOS alumni publish books



Childcare Experiences of African Immigrant Families in Minnesota
An Ecological Exploration and Implications for Policy, Practice and Research on Immigrant Families



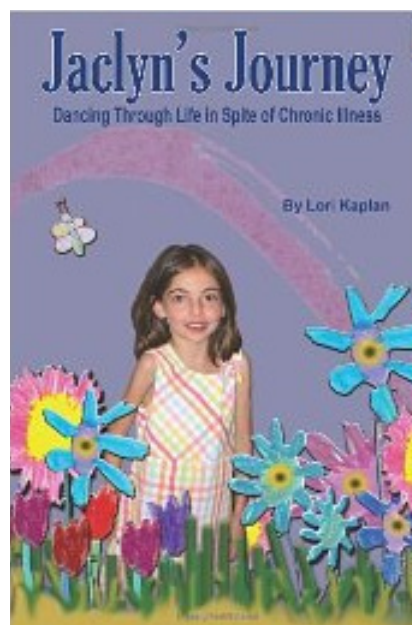
Childcare Experiences of African Immigrant Families in Minnesota: An Ecological Exploration and Implications for Policy, Practice and Research on Immigrant Families

Sayali Amarapurkar Ph.D. 2004

ISBN: 3-8383-37468

A thematic analysis of 56 qualitative interviews of 7 African immigrant families from Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Congo living in Minnesota revealed that these families resemble other poor families in considerations that guide their childcare choices. In addition to financial and other constraints (unstable jobs, lack of openings, transportation concerns, lack of access to relatives, lack of sick care, odd-hours care, problems with childcare subsidies) that

poor non-immigrant parents usually face, African immigrant families also face language difficulties, cultural barriers, lack of information and difficulties in navigating the system to get the childcare they want for their children. Overall, their childcare experiences were found to be affected by ecological correlates of child's age, mother's employment, family income, availability of relatives, and childcare subsidy policies. Findings show how childcare environment is a means for exchange of cultural practices and learning new behaviors for them and their children, thus helping them adapt to life in USA. Implications for policy, practice, and research are discussed in the context of immigrant family life.



Jaclyn's Journey: Dancing Through Life in Spite of Chronic Illness

Lori Kaplan, Ph.D. 1994

ISBN: 0-9823-70393

From Lori: "The book is called *Jaclyn's Journey: Dancing Through Life in Spite of Chronic Illness* and it's the story of my 10-year old daughter's life with congenital heart disease. It's about her incredible tenacity, spunk and spirit and her ability to LIVE a lifetime of childhood experiences, in spite of heart disease. This memoir describes Jaclyn's personality, her resourcefulness in finding humor in frightening medical ordeals, and her perseverance in the face of serious illness. It's about living a full life, being "normal," and not letting disease or disability define one's existence. Jaclyn danced through life with a smile, with laughter, and with a lot of love."

Staffing Changes



Jessup Schiks moves to Office of Human Resources

Jessup Schiks, former FSOS business support liason, has taken a new position with the Office of Human Resources, working in employee benefits. Jessup joined FSOS in April of 2009. With a desk in the front office of the department, his favorite parts of the job were the interactions he had with faculty and students. In his new position, he will be working with the direct bill system to balance, reconcile, and audit accounts. Jessup will continue to be a full-time employee and a full-time student, plus working on his home on the weekends. Once all of his house projects are completed, he looks forward to eventually volunteering as a reserve police officer.



Amanda Brown joins FSOS as new information representative

Amanda Brown joined the FSOS staff in March of 2010 as the new informational representative. Amanda comes from the Preparation to Practice Group (PPG) in the College of Education and Human Development. She brings her skills as a college “web guru” and her interests in web design and content strategy to the position. After graduating with a bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Minnesota in 2005, Amanda spent two years teaching English in Japan. In addition to working for FSOS, she will begin her pursuit of a master’s degree in Comparative and International Development Education in the fall. She is looking forward to the challenges and opportunities that FSOS has to offer.

Make a difference

Your gift is an investment in our collaborative learning community and your support will help us keep our community vital. With your donation we can continue to educate and support families, train students of all disciplines, and reach out to connect with and train professionals in your community.

Together, we can make a difference.

You may make a gift to the Department of Family Social Science through the University of Minnesota Foundation. You may choose to designate your gift to any of the funds below:

Friends of the Family Assistantship (3911)
Shirley Zimmerman Fund (5487)
David Olson Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship (5816)
FSOS Strategic Initiative (2748)
Jan Hogan Fellowship (5734)
Family Caregiving Program (5995)
Neubeck/Maddock Scholarship Fund (2191)
Wayne Caron Memorial Fund (1938)
Ott International Student Fellowship (1883)
David H. and Karen Olson Marriage and Family Fellowship (1920)
Family Stress and Resilience Endowment (7645)

You may also choose to memorialize a loved one by donating in their name. Visit www.foundation.umn.edu or call 612-626-8560 or 1-800-775-2187 for more information.

Thank you,


Family Social Science


Our Mission

To enhance the well-being of diverse families in a changing world through teaching, research, and outreach.